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ABSTRACT

A survey of the status of language usage in Algeria begins with an overview of the usage patterns of Arabic, the Berber languages, and French. The country's return to Arabic as its official language after independence from France in 1962 is discussed along with the resultant language planning, issues of language of instruction at the elementary, secondary, and higher education levels, and a recent resurgence of interest in the Berber languages. A matrix follows that rates Arabic, the Berber languages as a group, and French on: (1) their usage rating using State Department classifications; (2) increase and decrease trends by the year 2000; (3) chief of state use in addressing the populace; (4) use in armed forces, government, court, and diplomatic communications, written and oral; (5) use as a language of instruction or required language in higher education, on the secondary and elementary levels, and in adult education; (6) use in the popular press, radio and television broadcasting, and film; (7) business and professional use, written and oral; (8) use in intellectual circles; (9) the alphabet situation; (10) their status in literature; (11) use in public signs and notices; and (12) the availability of instructional materials and dictionaries for use by English speakers. Explanatory notes give the number and population percentages using the languages, the type of alphabets used, and specific instructional material titles. A selected bibliography is also included. (MSE)

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Language/Area Reference Center

COUNTRY STATUS REPORT:

ALGERIA

September, 1984

Prepared by:

Margaret McFerren

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Country Status Reports
September, 1984
Algeria - 1, Overview

Arabic, the official language of Algeria, is spoken as a native language by approximately 75% of the population. The remaining 25% or so speaks any one of the several Berber languages, of which Kabyle, Tamazight and Shilha have the largest numbers of speakers. Because the Berber languages are treated as one politically, they are represented simply as Berber on the Language Use Matrix. French is spoken as a second language by at least one-half of the population.

With independence in 1962, after 132 years of French colonization, the official desire to "return the Arabic language to the Algerians" assumed that Algerians would have been proficient in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) had the French not come, and was based on the desire to be a part of the pan-Arab world, culturally as well as politically. The linguistic choices open to planners at that time were either to foster French/Arabic (MSA) bilingualism or MSA monolingualism, a controversy which involved the attitudes of a sizeable French-educated elite, including many Berber-speakers (particularly Kabyles). Since MSA-proficient cadres were not available to staff the schools and the ministries, the plan adopted was to arabize gradually, and most government operations were via French at that time.

A decree was issued in 1968 requiring all Algerian officials to have a working knowledge of MSA by 1971. MSA classes were provided within government ministries and on the radio and television to prepare workers for the proficiency exams. The Ministry of Justice was the first to organize a program to arabize its internal functions, and today is held up as an example that complete arabization is possible. All internal proceedings in the Ministry of Justice are now in Arabic. All court proceedings are conducted in MSA, although official MSA interpreters are provided for monolingual Berber speakers, and testimony is admissable in colloquial Arabic where proficiency in MSA is lacking. Other government departments have been slower to arabize, and French is still used in written government documents, although there must be an accompanying Arabic version. Arabic is the language of instruction in Algerian military academies and enlisted men not proficient in MSA are given language classes upon entry into the armed forces. Approximately 50% of commercial transactions are now in Arabic, once solely the domain of French. In the media, both French and MSA are widely used, and radio programs are now available in Berber (Kablye).

Algeria's three goals in education are democratization, Algerianization, and arabization: education for all, by Algerian teachers, in Arabic. There has been a great deal of success in all three at the primary level, which is now completely arabized, with the study of French as a second language starting in the third year. Secondary school students may choose between all-Arabic or bilingual (MSA-French) programs, but in both types, the study of both Arabic and French is compulsory. Students at the university level have the option of following MSA or French-medium programs. The question of language medium in the university has become an explosive political issue in the last five years. In 1979, student strikes broke out in all the arabized sections of the University of Algiers. The protest centered around the lack of career openings for students leaving the university with Arabic diplomas, and also the lack of arabized post-graduate programs at the university. The strikers demanded an immediate and total arabization of the administration and education. It was not until the strikers began to be associated with Algeria's Muslim fundamentalist group, however, that strong official action was taken. Many of the proponents of arabization now hold key positions in government ministries, and a total arabization of the educational system is once again envisaged, although it is unclear how soon this could happen, especially at the university level.

An additional linguistic concern to the government over the last four years has been the resurgence of "berberism"--the demands of Berber-speakers to use their language and to have their culture represented as part of the national experience. The government's answer to these demands has been to establish a Berber-language radio station and to allow the study of Berber languages in the universities. Berber cultural programs are presented on television, but always introduced in MSA.

ALGERIA

Languages

Factoids	Arabic	Berber	French
1. Usage rating*	1	3	3
2. Increase/decrease	2	2	-
3. Chief of State use?	1	0	0
4. Armed Forces/written	2	0	2
5. Armed Forces/oral	1	0	0
6. Government/written	2	0	2
7. Government/oral, national	1	0	0
8. Government/oral, local	1	0	0
9. Court/written	1	0	0
10. Court/oral	1	3	0
11. Diplomatic use?	1	0	1
12. Higher education	1	0	1
13. Higher ed: required?	0	0	0
14. Secondary education	1	0	1
15. Secondary: required?	1	0	1
16. Primary education	1	0	0
17. Primary: required?	1	0	1
18. Adult education	1	0	4
19. Popular press use	2	0	2
20. Transmission across borders?	1	1	1
21. Use in radio broadcasting	2	3	2
22. Use in TV broadcasting	2	0	2
23. Use in film	1	0	1
24. Business/professional/written	2	0	2
25. Business/professional/oral	2	3	2
26. Use in intellectual circles	1	0	1
27. Alphabet situation*	1	0	1
28. Status of literature	1	0	2
29. Use in signs?	1	0	1
30. Teaching materials*	2	2	-
31. Bilingual dictionaries*	2	0	-

Notes:

Numbers are explained on following pages

? = information unavailable within time frame of project

- = not applicable

* = footnotes on following pages

1. 1984 ESTIMATES, NUMBER OF NATIVE SPEAKERS

Language	Number of Native Speakers	Percentage of Population
Arabic	16,050,000	75%
Berber	5,350,000	25%

27. TYPE OF ALPHABET USED

Language	Alphabet
Arabic	Arabic
Berber	No modern alphabet exists
French	Roman

30. TEACHING MATERIALS FOR ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Language	Texts
Arabic (Modern Standard)	Abboud, Peter F. et al. Elementary Modern Standard Arabic, Parts I and II. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Department of Near Eastern and North African Studies, 1975-76. . Modern Standard Arabic, Intermediate Level: Parts I-III. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Department of Near Eastern and North African Studies, 1972. Azmi, Sanaa and Belkacem Baccouche. Conversations in Modern Standard Arabic. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984.
Arabic (Algerian)	No texts available for the English speaker; to date all teaching materials for Algerian Arabic are in French.
Berber (Kabyle)	Applegate, Joseph R. Spoken Kabyle: A Basic Course. Los Angeles, CA: University of California, 1966. (available only through the ERIC system and from the author)

3i. DICTIONARIES FOR THE ENGLISH SPEAKER

Language	Texts
Arabic (Modern Standard)	al-Baalbaki, Munir. Al-Mawrid. A Modern English-Arabic Dictionary, 16th ed. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-'ilm lil Mabayin, 1982.
	Doniach, Nakdimon S., (ed). The Oxford English-Arabic Dictionary of Current Usage. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1978.
	Wehr, Hans. Arabic-English Dictionary. Translated and edited by J. Milton Cowan. Ithaca, NY: Spoken Language Services, 1977.
	al-Karmi, Hasan S. Al-Manar, English-Arabic Dictionary. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1972.
Arabic (Algerian)	No dictionaries are available for the English speaker learning Algerian Arabic.
Berber	No dictionaries are available for the English speaker learning Berber languages.

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Savignac, Pierre H. Contes Berberes de Kabylie. Montreal: Les Presses de l'Universite du Quebec, 1978.

Center for Applied Linguistics/LARC
Country Status Report
June 1984
Explanation of Matrix Figures - a

1. Usage rating, using the State Department classifications
   1: Official language, most widely used.
   2: Official language, not most widely used.
   3: Widely used language, but not official. (Over 10% of population)
   4: Unofficial language used by significant minority (but less than 3)
   5: Unofficial language used by influential minority
      FOOTNOTE: NUMBERS OF SPEAKERS, PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION

2. Increase/decrease trends by the year 2000
   1: Number of native speakers will increase in proportion
   2: Number of native speakers will remain proportionally constant
   3: Number of native speakers will decrease in proportion

3. Chief of State use, in addressing populace: YES (1) NO (0)

4. Armed Forces written communications
   1: Only language used in official communiques
   2: One of the languages used in official communiques
   0: Not used in official communiques

5. Armed Forces oral communications
   1: Used on all levels
   2: Used among officers only
   3: Used among multi-lingual NCO's and troops
   4: Used among monolingual troops only
   0: Not used

6. Written government communications
   1: Only language used in official communications
   2: One of the languages used in official communications
   0: Not used in official communications

7. Oral government communications/national level
   1: Official language spoken in national assembly
   2: One of the official languages spoken in national assembly
   0: Not used in government

8. Oral government communications/local level
   1: Official language in local government
   2: One of the official languages used in local government
   3: Allowed in local government proceedings, translated into official language
   0: Not used in local government

9. Court use in written communications
   1: Only language used in official communications
   2: One of the languages used in official communications
   0: Not used

Center for Applied Linguistics/LARC
Country Status Report
June 1984
Explanation of Matrix Figures - b

10. Court use in oral communications
    1: Only official language used in court
    2: One of the official languages used in court
    3: Allowed in courts, translated into official language(s)
    0: Not used in courts

11. Diplomatic use in notes to other countries: YES (1) NO (0)

12. Use in higher education
    1: Official medium of instruction
    2: Unofficial medium of instruction
    0: Not used

13. Language taught as subject in required courses in higher education:
    YES (1) NO (0)

14. Use in secondary education
    1: Official medium of instruction
    2: Unofficial medium of instruction
    0: Not used as medium of instruction

15. Language taught as subject in required courses on secondary level?
    YES (1) NO (0)

16. Use in primary education
    1: Official medium of instruction
    2: Unofficial medium of instruction
    0: Not used as medium of instruction

17. Language taught as subject in required courses on primary level?
    YES (1) NO (0)

18. Language use in adult education
    1: Used in oral and written technical instruction
    2: Used in oral and written life skills instruction
    3: Used in oral life skills instruction
    4: Used in literacy classes only
    0: Not used in adult informal education

19. Language use in popular press
    1: Used in publications throughout country
    2: Used in centrally-based publications with national distribution
    3: Used only in regional and local publications
    4: Used in clandestine publications only
    0: Not used

Center for Applied Linguistics/LARC
Country Status Report
June 1984
Explanation of Matrix Figures - c

20. Language used in radio/TV transmission across national borders?
YES (1) NO (0)

21. Language use in radio broadcasting
1: Language used broadcasting thoughout country
2: Language used in centrally-based national broadcasts
3: Language used in local broadcasting only
3: Language used in clandestine broadcasting only
0: Language not used in radio broadcasting

22. Language use in TV broadcasting
1: Language used in telecasting throughout country
2: Language used in centrally-based national telecasting
3: Language used regional and local telecasting only
0: Language not used in TV

23. Language use in film
1: Language used in indigenous film-making
2: Foreign-language films dubbed/subtitled into language
0: Language not used in films

24. Business/Professional use - written
1: Sole official language in business and professional communications
2: One of the official languages in business and professional communication
0: Not used

25. Business/Professional use - oral
1: Used in trade and commerce throughout country
2: Used in national trade and commerce only
3: Used only in local trade and commerce

26. Language use in intellectual circles
1: Language used in indigenous scholarly publications
2: Language used in formal scholarly discussion
0: Language not used

27. Alphabet situation
1: Established standardized alphabet exists.
2: Alphabet developed, no standardization
3: Competing alphabets exist
0: No alphabet exists
FOOTNOTE: TYPE OF ALPHABET USED

28. Status of indigenous literature
1: Established written tradition exists
2: Literature tradition emerging
3: Popular literature exists
0: No written literature exists

29. Language used in official public signs, notices: YES (1) NO (0)

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Country Status Report
June 1984
Explanation of Matrix Figures - d

30. Teaching materials for English speakers
    1: Wide range of teaching materials exists
    2: Narrow range of teaching materials exists
    0: No teaching materials exist
    FOOTNOTE: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

31. Dictionaries for English speakers
    1: Wide range of bilingual dictionaries exists
    2: Narrow range of dictionaries exists
    0: No dictionaries exist
    FOOTNOTE: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY